

Series: Being faithful disciples in a God-defying world. (A study of Mark)

Sermon Text: 5:21-43 (cf. Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56) **Kids Word:** Power

We're studying the fast-paced book of Mark, which presents Jesus as the Son of God & Son of Man.

- The last time we were together, we began pulling apart Mark's story sandwich. The outer part described a desperate, upper-class man, whose *12-year-old daughter* got sick. Today, we'll get into the middle part, describing how this man's efforts to save his *daughter* were interrupted by a desperate, lower-class *woman*. We'll see this...

BIG IDEA: Simple faith plugs us into God's power.

Let's consider some key ideas in our text.

*21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, **he fell at his feet** 23 and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." 24 And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. 25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. 28 For she said, "If I touch even (Matt/Lk-the fringe of) his garments, I will be made well." 29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.*

An unwelcomed interruption. (5:21-29)

- The clock was ticking, and Jesus agreed to follow *Jairus* home; however, their urgent rescue mission was interrupted by a *woman*, who had been *hemorrhaging* for *12 years* (the entire life of *Jairus' daughter*!). If you've ever felt weak after donating blood, imagine a *12-year* blood draw! She *suffered* at the hand of *many physicians* who only made her *poorer* and sicker. In those days, they tried all sorts of costly, superstitious, and ridiculous remedies (see Jewish cures below). Her misery impacted everything. She was forbidden to be in a *crowd* by Jewish law which deemed such persons and anything they touched "unclean" (cf. Leviticus 15:19-33). Many would have assumed her *sickness* was punishment for her sins, and if she had been married, her husband would have left her with society's blessing. Hopeful desperation drove her to try this Jesus she had *heard reports about*. So, she snuck *up from behind* and *touched His garment*. *Immediately*, her *flow of blood dried up*, and *she felt healing in her body*.

30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that (healing) power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said

to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." 35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

Mixed responses. (5:30-36)

- Jesus *perceived* healing *power had gone out from him* and asked, "**Who touched me?**" Before the *woman* could confess, *His disciples* interrupted--likely irritated at Jesus for delaying their urgent mission. They essentially said, "It's a big crowd, everyone is touching you! Let's keep moving." The *woman, afraid and trembling, fell before him and told him the whole truth.* Don't you just love how Jesus is concerned for the 1 among the "99" (cf. Matthew 18:12)? If we're to become more like Him, we must become less like the crowd (i.e. repent/deny self).
- Stop and imagine the mindsets in that moment--**The disciples may have thought**, "Doesn't Jesus realize how helpful this *synagogue ruler* could be to our cause politically and socially?" **Jairus was likely frustrated and may have thought**, "Doesn't He know...who I am? ...who SHE is? ...what I risked in coming to Him? ...my situation is more urgent than hers!" Imagine his thoughts after being told his *daughter had died* during this unwelcomed interruption! **The woman may have thought**, "This is humiliating...I'm so ashamed and unworthy. I just violated the law & defiled a holy man...what was I thinking? I've got to get out of here!" **The crowd may have thought**, "What is she doing here? Has she infected us?" It's safe to say, everyone "got schooled" that day when Jesus sought the *woman* in the *crowd* and said, *Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.*

How can Mark's 1st century writings help our discipleship in today's God-defying world?

Jesus is the key figure in this text.

- While we SHOULD identify with these people, what if Jesus was absent from the story? It's different then, isn't it? God arranged this moment of mismatched people meeting before Jesus to display the *power* of His kingdom through Jesus. Think back to when Jesus taught the 4 kingdom parables from the boat. Afterwards came the storm, the demon-possessed guy, this *woman's* healing, and the resurrection of *Jairus' daughter*. These events illustrated the point of those parables, which is "God's mysterious kingdom is coming in *powerful* and unexpected ways", and they prove Jesus is God's representative and Lord over disasters, demons, disease, and death--things we cannot control! This is more than a story of compassion, it's about who

Jesus is and what He's like! Colossians 1:15 says, "He is the image of the invisible God", i.e. the more we learn about Jesus, the more we learn about God. God wants to be known, so He sent us Jesus to correct our wild misunderstandings! That's the bigger picture here.

Jesus shows us what God is like.

- ***God helps all kinds of people.*** These stories are sandwiched together to force us to make comparisons. ***Jairus*** was a man of wealth and high standing, who had the "right" to be in the ***crowd*** and publicly seek help. The ***woman*** was so poor, we don't even know her name. She had lost her right to be in public spaces and should not have been touching anyone, let alone a man who was not her husband! The ***12-year old girl*** had suffered in the familiar comfort of her bedroom and family, while the ***woman*** had suffered ***12 years*** as an outcast, who had likely forgotten how it felt to be ***touched***. Who might you have helped in that moment, and what does that imply about your understanding of who Jesus is and what He is like?
- ***God is our common need.*** Their God-given, human limitations brought them equally and humbly before Jesus. Despite his achievements, ***Jairus*** was ***powerless*** to heal his ***little girl***, who like the ***woman***, could not be ***healed*** unless the ***power*** came from Jesus. The same is true for us, no matter our life status. And nobody is more deserving or less deserving of God's help, because no creation was designed to function independent of God. We equally need divine ***power*** which God freely provides to those who ***believe*** in Him. Is this your reality or are you under the delusion that you can be self-made and have ***power*** to do anything you desire?
- ***God accepts imperfect faith.*** ***Jairus*** just wanted his ***daughter*** to be well--Jesus was a last resort. The ***woman*** just wanted to stop ***bleeding***--Jesus was one of many options she tried. Both knew little about Jesus and His capabilities--***Jairus*** didn't realize Jesus was unlimited by time or space; the ***woman*** had no clue Jesus would notice her ***touch***. My point? Imperfect ***faith*** in Jesus is enough to get started with God! Becoming a Christian is supernatural--it's not about how much you know or how well you perform. This ***woman*** did not take a theology quiz or pray a certain way or figure things out or get her act together. She just ***fell*** honestly & humbly before the perfect object of ***faith***, who perfects our ***faith*** as we get to know Him. I'll spare you the long explanation; but Numbers 15:37-41 implies her Jewish upbringing likely led her to reach for the ***fringe*** of Jesus' ***garment*** to "***Remember to follow God's commands and not her heart and eyes.***" She had tried everything to fix a condition she didn't fully understand, now

she would try a small gesture of *faith*. Chuck Swindoll wrote, “This poor woman represents humanity--all of us. We are ill. We have spent our resources trying remedies that don’t work.” Do you realize, the sooner you try Jesus, the sooner He can prove His superior *power* to you?

- ***God desires relationship***. Jesus could have done a long-distance healing for *Jairus’ daughter* and simply let the *woman* walk away healed. Yet, that’s not how Jesus operates--He wants to be more than a vending machine! He desired to go further with *Jairus*. He discerned the touch of the *woman* from the entire *pressing crowd*, proving God is never too busy for us! He gave the nameless *woman* a new identity and outlook--He called her *daughter*, proclaimed she now had *peace* with God and restored her status before the *crowd*. How did that impact her? *Verse 33* says *knowing what had happened to her* outweighed her reasons for hiding and not living openly and honestly. How is the work of Jesus encouraging you to pursue relationships?
- ***God takes our worst and gives His best***. As I mentioned earlier, God setup these *power* events. They prove Jesus is the Messiah prophesied by **Isaiah 53:3-5**. He was rejected on the other side of the sea. He took the *woman’s* uncleanness and sickness to give her purity and health. By taking the *dead girl’s hand*, He took religious defilement to give her new life. On the cross, He took our penalty and shame to give us forgiveness and righteousness. Nothing is so awful that Jesus cannot or will not handle it, if we reach out to Him in *faith*. He accepts all who believe in Him regardless of gender, education, impurity, namelessness or circumstance. No one’s worth or circumstance is greater or lesser to Jesus! Hear and believe the words of John 5:24, “*I assure you those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me will have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins. They have already passed from death into life.*”

So, what’s your NEXT STEP?

- Remember, our next step always begins with faith in Christ. Either placing faith in Him for the first time or exercising faith to repent, change, and grow. Either way, His Spirit will help you. As we’ve seen, we don’t have to remain in a place of fear. As we imperfectly investigate God’s hope we can encounter and believe in Jesus, who will reveal freedom and purpose like we’ve never dreamed possible.

Quotes/Additional thoughts:

- **The ailment:** “The Bible is not specific about the woman's ailment, but based on the Greek wording it is generally thought to be menorrhagia: a heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding often caused by issues such as uterine cysts. The word "discharge" is from the Greek root word

rhusis which indicates flowing blood. Though it does not mean a traumatic, "pouring" bleeding, women who have experienced extremely heavy menstruation know that it can be both uncomfortable and unsettling. In this woman's case, her condition is likely heavy enough to cause chronic anemia and severe pain." (Bibleref.com)

- **Possible superstition:** "One of the widespread beliefs of that day was that if one could get close to a great man or to a healer and touch his clothing, that would be all it would take. So, her hope was based at least partly on superstition. Surprisingly, people still accept such ideas. Ministers on television offer to send handkerchiefs they have blessed in return for a donation, and the dollars pour in. The idea, basically, is that physically touching someone (or something he has touched) who has a hotline to God will prove beneficial. Of course, there is no biblical support for such an idea. (RC Sproul)
- **Jewish "cures":** "A list of procedures for curing a woman who suffers from a flow of blood appears in the Babylonian Talmud. Possibly this poor woman endured some of them: Let them procure three kapiza of Persian onions, boil them in wine, make her drink it, and say to her, "Cease your discharge." But if not, she should be made to sit at cross-roads, hold a cup of wine in her hand, and a man comes up from behind, frightens her and exclaims, "Cease your discharge!" But if not, a handful of cummin, a handful of saffron, and a handful of fenugreek are brought and boiled in wine, she is made to drink it, and they say to her, "Cease your discharge." But if not, let sixty pieces of sealing clay of a [wine] vessel be brought, and let them smear her and say to her, "Cease your discharge." It offers five more remedies; the last suggests fetching a barley grain from the dung of a white mule. When she eats it and holds it in one day, her discharge will cease for one day, if for two days, her discharge will cease for two days, if for three days, it will cease forever... In popular belief, the clothes of holy men, and especially the fringes, were thought to possess miraculous power." (David E. Garland)
- **Desperation may be a gift:** Romans 8 assures us that God excels at using desperate situations for the good of those who love Him. Notice it was only at their most desperate points that Jairus and the bleeding woman received the humility and faith to know Jesus intimately and experientially. Chuck Swindoll wrote, "For humility to displace skepticism, we often must reach the point of desperation...for trust to eclipse our panic, we must learn the value of delay." C. S. Lewis put it this way: "[Pain] plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul."
- **Why Jairus and the woman, but not others?** "Just as Jesus wasn't coming to be a one-man liberation movement in the traditional revolutionary sense, so he wasn't coming to be a one-man emergency medical center. He was indeed starting a revolution, and he was indeed bringing God's healing *power*, but his aim went deeper; these things were signs of the real revolution, the real healing, that God was to accomplish through his death and resurrection. Signposts are important, but they aren't the destination. For that we must read on." NT Wright
- **Embarrassment:** What's your source of shame or embarrassment? Even today, some medical conditions are seen as more honorable than others. A broken arm is less socially embarrassing than hemorrhoids, for instance. In the same vein, women are taught from a very early age to hide any hint of menstruation. Once again, Jesus shows that He doesn't care about social convention. He doesn't care if it's an injury, an illness, something we're born with, or even something that would make us ritually unclean if we were still under the Mosaic Law. In fact, sometimes God will even use the ignoble physical conditions to bring us closer to Him—to help us in our journey toward spiritual maturity. When faced with a debilitating, embarrassing

disease, we should remember we can always take it to God. He may not heal our physical condition, but the spiritual blessing He will give us will outweigh any pain or discomfort.” (Bibleref.com)

Articles:

- <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2019/05/13/721450261/why-its-so-hard-to-stop-women-from-sleeping-in-a-menstrual-shed>

Songs/Videos:

Helpful thoughts for discussion leaders:

1. Go for a single, not a home run...don't drag the night out; realize more people = less deep sharing.
2. Keep discussion around 30mins. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.

Challenge Questions

Review the BIG IDEA: Simple faith plugs us into God's power.

-Simple questions...What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

Preparation questions for Mark 5:21-36.

- When Jesus got off the boat again, who fell at His feet and what did he want? (5:21-23)
- What happened on the way to help Jairus? (5:24-29)
- What did the woman and the little girl have in common? (5:24, 42)
- Compare and contrast Jairus and the hemorrhaging woman.
- Why did Jesus say the woman was made whole? (5:34)

Application questions from Mark 5:21-36.

- Who would you have helped in this story? What does that say about your understanding of who Jesus is and what He is like?
- What have you learned about what God and Jesus are like? Any surprises?
- How has focus on self or situation caused you to miss the presence or work of Jesus?
- How have you discovered Jesus perfecting your faith as you've walked with Him?
- In what ways are you trying to operate independently of God?
- What has studying this text revealed about your identity and purpose?
- What has Jesus taken from you? What has He given you?
- Describe ways we might offer people products and service without offering them Jesus and relationship.
- How can we be more encouraging of those with uninformed or misguided faith without condoning bad theology?
- How do these stories encourage us that no person and no situation are beyond Jesus' ability to restore?

Here are some great resources for digging deeper into community group life...

How life together looks <http://austinstone.org/stories/film/item/140-missional-community-lukes-story>

Rethinking what we do https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvWnXYSELF4&feature=player_embedded

Numerous articles to provoke thought <http://toddenstrom.com/archives/>

What groups of 2-3 might look like <http://tod dengstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LTG-Overview.pdf>